

The Scots Abolitionists, 1833-1861

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Book Reviews

subject nor quite measures up to the high standards usually displayed by the venerable publishing house that produced it.

In spite of these faults, it makes worthwhile reading for journalists as well as all persons with interest in the history of Indian-white relations. A forward by *Wassaja* editor Jeanette Henry is thoughtful and provocative. The appendixes make a useful bibliography of Indian media sources. The whole text is a pioneering effort; to date, no other publication supplies as much information about the subject. Scholars, students, general readers, and journalists all will benefit from its contents.

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HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

HERBERT T. HOOVER

The Scots Abolitionists, 1833-1861, by C. Duncan Rice. Baton Rouge, Louisiana and London, England: Louisiana State University Press, 1981. pp. xii, 221. Notes, appendixes, index. \$27.50.

The abolition of slavery was not a cause which suddenly sprang up in 1833 and ended in 1861, even in the non-slave state, Scotland. However, C. Duncan Rice has chosen, in *The Scots Abolitionists, 1833-1861*, to focus his attention on that three-decade period. His justification for so delimiting his study is that other works cover the preceding and subsequent eras more than adequately. Also, during those three decades the Scottish movement reached levels of influence and intensity unmatched before or since. Thus, *The Scots Abolitionists, 1833-1861*.

Among the factors which allowed the abolitionists movement to flourish in Scotland after 1833 was economic realism. As Rice notes, prior to the elimination of West Indian slavery in 1833, many ambitious Scots sought their fortunes in that slave-holding region. Even those persons who opposed slavery were cognizant of the hypocrisy involved in advocating the elimination of a system while enjoying its benefits. Abolitionism was a theoretical rather than a practical concern prior to the 1830s. The elimination of the slave-holding option allowed abolitionists to become more aggressive.

Furthering the flowering of Scottish abolitionism in the 1830s was the turmoil of Scottish society. The industrial revolution was overturning the traditional social relationships, and Scottish political life was increasingly controlled from London or by a small but influential political machine. Most important was the religious situation as the Old Church, the last remaining purely Scottish institution, faced op-

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position from new, less traditional factions and schisms. Religious fragmentation compounded the instability resulting from economic dislocation and political insufficiency.

With middle-class Scots seeking something to provide a moral direction in a time of flux, the abolition of American slavery attracted a considerable following, especially after the American movement polarized between Garrison and the moderates in the early 1840s. Each group accused the other of moral error, and Scots leaped into the fray—Old Kirk with the moderates and New Kirk and reformers with the Garrisonian radicals. Further enhancing the attractiveness of the radical position for dissenting Scots was the fact that the British anti-slavery society tended to support the conservative position. Abolition was a means of opposing the old powers when all other avenues appeared to be closed.

Rice stresses the divergence of the Scottish from other abolitionist movements, but he also notes the interaction between American and Scot, and he emphasizes that a major result of the Scots taking sides in the American dispute was the increased polarization of American society prior to the Civil War. Also, Rice describes the waning of Scottish radicalism when society re-stabilized in the 1850s.

The Scots Abolitionists, 1833-1861 is intended specifically for an American audience. Unfortunately, Rice assumes a greater familiarity with Scottish history than is common in most non-specialist American historians. As a result, Rice's argument is sometimes hard to follow. But unfamiliarity with each specific should not prohibit the non-expert reader from gaining some insight into and appreciation for an obscure but hardly insignificant movement, especially one that had some influence on a vital period in American history.

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

BARBARA CLAYTON BARNHILL

The American Small Town: Twentieth-Century Place Images, by John A. Jakle. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1982. pp. 195. Bibliography, index. \$25.00.

John Jakle's new book is a thought-provoking study of the American small town. However, it is not limited to presenting and analyzing the images of that type of community—in spite of what his subtitle indicates. There is much in the book about the reality of small-town life as well.

In his preface, the author asserts, "I am concerned to describe the idea of the typical American town—to identify the prevailing social

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